

MAYOR & COUNCIL AGENDA COVER SHEET

MEETING DATE:

June 21, 2007

RESPONSIBLE STAFF:

**Greg Ossont, Director
Planning and Code
Administration**

CALL TO PODIUM:

**Greg Ossont, Director
Planning and Code
Administration**

AGENDA ITEM:

(please check one)

	Presentation
	Proclamation/Certificate
	Appointment
	Public Hearing
	Historic District
	Consent Item
	Ordinance
	Resolution
	Policy Discussion
X	Work Session Discussion Item
	Other:

PUBLIC HEARING HISTORY:

(Please complete this section if agenda item is a public hearing)

Introduced	
Advertised	
Hearing Date	
Record Held Open	
Policy Discussion	

TITLE:

Introduction of HOK Planning Group and Overview of the Kentlands Boulevard Commercial District Community Outreach Activities Charrette Schedule

SUPPORTING BACKGROUND:

Staff will introduce the project team from HOK Planning Group who will be facilitating the community outreach activities for the Kentland Boulevard Commercial District Special Study Area as well as conducting the planning charrette September 6 – 11, 2007.

The project team will give a brief overview of their firm's experience and qualifications as well as provide an overview of the series of events leading to the charrette in September.

The team will also discuss the methodologies used to gather stakeholder input, conduct workshops on specific subjects including transportation, urban design and retail centers.

Presentation approximately 20 minutes.

Attachments:

Approach and Scope of Services

DESIRED OUTCOME:

Hear presentation.



Attachment A SCOPE OF SERVICES

Kentlands Boulevard Commercial District | City of Gaithersburg, Maryland

APPROACH

HOK will approach this planning effort as a dynamic and interactive process with the community and City Staff. We will work closely with City of Gaithersburg Staff in identifying and defining all relevant project goals, objectives, functions, responsibilities and relationships. HOK will coordinate the detailed work of the team members on all phases of the project. We have assembled a team that has a proven working relationship on complex interactive planning projects and is unparalleled for the complete planning, programming, managing and executing of each project. Their sensitivity and expertise allows us to be flexible in our approach and to tailor our procedures to suit the unique project and special circumstance. This collaborative approach encourages participation and enriches the project with the best possible sources of information and decision-making.

The philosophy that supports the master planning process begins as an exercise in problem definition. Planning constraints and opportunities evolve from a variety of physical and nonphysical conditions and needs of the client. The master plan is woven from the creative combination of these diverse factors. An engaging public participation plan ensures that the community and its neighbors are actively involved in the process through traditional methods—public meetings, workshops, stakeholder interviews and design charrettes—and progressive techniques—websites and web-based public surveys—to solicit public feedback. The methodology establishes mechanisms for developing, testing and evaluating solutions and subsequently translating these conceptual ideas into working solutions for growth and change. The active use of the feedback loop process for public participation ensures that as the planning effort progresses, community members are able to respond to the concepts and ideas presented at each milestone and afforded the opportunity to comment and voice their opinions before the process moves forward.

A successful planning process recognizes basic components in order to establish a context for change. The components include public engagement and dynamic public process, community impact, financial requirements, revenue sources, transportation, circulation, parking, land use, architecture and environmental design. The goal is a master plan that will guide the future growth of a locale, specific enough to show location and character of future development, yet flexible in order to accommodate programmatic changes or other evolving factors. The HOK Planning Group offers a full range of planning services from the regional scale to site specific design. As one of the largest planning groups in the world providing client services for over 30 years, we are experienced in solving complex planning problems with a strong emphasis on client needs, the environment and budget realities.



WORK PLAN

Task 1. Project Initiation & Conditions Assessment

- 1.1. *Project Initiation Meeting.* HOK Team Leaders will meet with City Staff to review the scope, budget, and schedule; communications protocols; and discuss the logistics of the Public Outreach and Charrette Plans. In advance of the meeting, City Staff will identify a list of key stakeholders in the community to be included in initial public outreach efforts described in *Task 2.2* (Key Stakeholder Listening Sessions) below. These individuals may include, but are not limited to: property and business owners, civic leaders, local officials, civic activists, and others.

Product: Meeting notes via email

Timeframe & Staff: This shall be one three-hour meeting; attended by three staff from HOK, the consultants and City of Gaithersburg City Staff.

- 1.2. *Data Collection.* Prior to the Project Initiation Meeting HOK will work with City Staff to identify relevant planning studies and reports, policy documents, development proposals, and data sets for use in the planning effort. The following are among the material and data HOK will seek from the City:
- regulatory documents – comprehensive plan, zoning map and ordinance, and other documents related to special study areas;
 - aerial photograph(s);
 - GIS data – building footprints, curb lines, street centerlines, property lines, land cover (pavement, sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, lawn cover, landscaping, etc), land use and zoning, transportation (rail and bus information – routes, lines, stops, stations, facilities, etc), environmental, water bodies, topography, boundaries (city, county, special districts, etc), and historic (sites, structures, districts, etc);
 - draft and final reports, design studies and plans, and technical appendices/datasets prepared in support of plans for areas in and around the study area;
 - relevant land use and development data including existing uses, square footage of buildings, seating capacities and room numbers, ownership, land and improvement value, recent sales, building age and conditions, etc. (access to datasets from the city's property assessor's records would be most helpful);
 - information regarding planned development, including form, use, square footage, parking, and expected completion dates;



- cultural resource data, including copies of existing guidelines, survey reports, etc.;
- the most recent traffic counts available for the area, the most recent Transportation Improvement program, any relevant transportation plans and studies, and any previous parking studies that have been conducted and any current plan elements addressing parking; and
- strategic plans, organizational charts, and mission statements of neighborhood and civic organizations active in the area.

Product: HOK will use material collected to aid in the production of materials listed in Task 1.3.

Timeframe & Staff: Review of the relevant data collection materials will be continuous as City Staff provides HOK with requested materials.

- 1.3. *Use Inventory & Analysis of Existing Conditions.* Upon review of data collected in Task 1.2, HOK will compile and produce a set of existing conditions base maps for use throughout the planning process. Depending on available information, these maps may include the following:

- Land Use
- Zoning
- Open Space
- Civic Buildings
- Transportation & Transit
- Environment & Natural Resources
- Figure-Ground Analysis

The HOK Team will complete a site visit and windshield survey of the existing district that will include a generalized photographic record of the existing conditions. This will supplement the inventory provided to the team by the City Staff on the existing uses, heights, vacancies, businesses, building conditions, etc.

An inventory of retail establishments located in the study area recording the tenant name, address, approximate size, retail category and class of retail space will also be completed.

Product: See list above for base maps; photo survey; existing retail establishments spreadsheet

Timeframe & Staff: The site visit and windshield survey will be completed within 30 calendar days by the HOK design team.



- 1.4. *Market Analysis.* Retail Compass will conduct an evaluation of current residential and commercial office markets in the immediate Gaithersburg area. This information will provide development guidance for the type, amount and density of an appropriate “primary” use for the site. Retail Compass will undertake a focused study of the local retail market for the study area. This analysis will be based on the impact from existing retail competition, site conditions, and customer expenditures within appropriate trade areas.

Data regarding residential, office and retail demand will be generated to guide the planning and design team’s work effort, insuring market-supportable plans and documents. Further, this information will be incorporated into the public participation sessions to inform members of the community about realistic expectations for the study area.

Product: Market Analysis report will be incorporated into final documents. Data generated in this report will be included in Public Visioning Session and Charrette, as appropriate.

Timeframe & Staff: Approximately six weeks from project award.

- 1.5. *Transportation Analysis.* The Traffic Group will complete an evaluation of the traffic and transportation impacts on the Kentlands Boulevard Commercial District. The evaluation will take into account the future multi-modal transportation and transit opportunities, increased traffic volumes, as well as pedestrian, and bicyclist safety. The study shall include the following tasks:

- Conduct a field inspection to collect physical information concerning the nearby road system, including condition diagrams and photo surveys.
- Obtain from the City or County existing traffic volumes along the roadway or, if need be, conduct traffic counts to determine existing volumes.
- Conduct observations (windshield survey) of traffic and parking conditions along the roadways through the Kentland retail area.
- Observe traffic conditions in the retail area in the evening hours on a Thursday or Friday and mid-day on Saturday.
- Obtain information from MD DOT regarding the CTP ridership and try to make a determination of how much ridership is anticipated on the nearest stop closest to the Kentlands retail area.
- Conduct analysis to determine existing traffic conditions.
- Make recommendations for on-site and off-site parking, circulation, and traffic control devices.

Product: Technical Memorandum outlining our findings and conclusions that will include sketches of any improvements that may be required. Data generated in this report will be included in Public Visioning Session and Charrette, as appropriate.



Timeframe & Staff: Approximately six weeks from project award.

Task 2. Public Outreach

- 2.1. *Kick-Off Meeting.* HOK will prepare for and attend a public kick-off meeting to introduce the team to the stakeholders, and review and discuss the overall project scope and schedule. In addition, an overview of the public outreach plan, including resources available for public engagement, and the schedule for the charrette process will be discussed in detail at this public meeting.

The City Staff will coordinate and arrange for the meeting space and use regular resources and methods for public notification, including: newspaper notices, public fliers, email distribution lists/list serves, etc in addition to HOK posting the meeting date, time, location ,etc on the project website.

Product: Meeting notes via email.

Timeframe & Staff: This shall be one two-hour public meeting. Three staff people shall attend the meeting from HOK and the consultants will be asked to participate.

- 2.2. *Web-Based Public Engagement Techniques.* The HOK Team will utilize a project website to serve as a public engagement platform to disseminate information, notify the community about public engagement activities, solicit community feedback and encourage interaction between interested parties. In addition, the team will also use web-based survey methods as a way to reach a wider public audience in the community and adjacent areas, two brief survey are included. The project website may include:

- Project calendar with major milestones & meeting dates;
- Summary reports & meeting notes for public review;
- Notifications / invitations for public engagement activities;
- Link to City of Gaithersburg website;

Other methods, not specifically included above include, such as online chats for comment forums and live chats, and extensive web-based surveys may be added after determining project needs with the City Staff.

Product: The HOK Team will complete the design of the website and train City Staff on its structure and use as a public engagement and communication tool as well as a platform for team/staff collaboration.

Timeframe & Staff: Initial preparation of the web site will require 4 to 6 weeks depending upon the complexity of the site and review time, once launched website maintenance will be ongoing. HOK will host the web site until December 17th, 2007. At that time the site can be removed or transferred to the City to host, cost



associated with this transfer will be an additional service to this contract, and will be negotiated at that time if requested by the City.

- 2.3. *Key Stakeholder Listening Sessions.* Following the data collection and existing conditions analysis described above, we will plan, schedule and conduct up to 8 (eight) 1.5-hour interviews with key stakeholders to refine our understanding of conditions and expectations, review planning strategies, and begin building working relationships with those likely to influence the planning process and the city's ability to carry ideas into implementation. HOK shall work with the City Staff to identify the 8 (eight) parties to participate in this process.

The City Staff will coordinate and arrange for the meeting space to be used for the listening sessions and will correspond with key stakeholders to invite and confirm attendance at the sessions.

Product: Meeting notes via email.

Timeframe & Staff: HOK will be available to attend the eight sessions as needed and shall coordinate with the City to schedule. Three staff people shall attend the meeting from HOK and the consultants will be asked to participate in selected sessions.

- 2.4. *Public Visioning Sessions.* HOK staff will prepare for and attend a series of public visioning sessions to solicit public input on three key topic areas and their implications for the study area:

- *Retail*
- *Transportation / Transit*
- *Urban Design*

HOK will be responsible for generating discussion, and monitoring and facilitating focused round table discussions with attendees. The open forum will utilize visioning and drawing exercises to stimulate conversations regarding the specific topics. HOK will provide base maps, precedent imagery and other material as necessary to promote discussion.

These visioning sessions may be conducted as three distinct meetings on individual nights or they may be combined into one meeting that is composed of three separate consecutive discussions, conducted on a Saturday. (Chosen method will not change the quoted fee).

The City Staff will coordinate and arrange for the meeting space and use regular resources and methods for public notification, including: newspaper notices, public



fliers, email distribution lists/list serves, etc in addition to HOK posting the meeting date, time, location, etc on the project website.

Product: Meeting notes via email.

Timeframe & Staff: HOK will work with City Staff to determine the optimal format for the public visioning sessions, three sessions or one session (with three consecutive discussions) as described above. Three staff people shall attend the meeting from HOK and the consultants will be asked to participate.

- 2.5. *Public Outreach Summary Report.* HOK staff will compile results and prepare a report summarizing the public participation activities and results of the key stakeholder listening sessions (Task 2.4.), web surveys (Task 2.3.) and public visioning workshops (Task 2.4.).

Product: Adobe PDF and hard copy format of the Public Outreach Summary Report. An Adobe PDF copy will be uploaded to the project website.

Timeframe & Staff: The summary report for the public outreach will be completed in 25 days.

Task 3. The Charrette

- 3.1. *Charrette Preparation.* Prior to the design charrette, described below, the team will work with staff to refine the schedule, arrange for space, prepare materials, and coordinate outreach and communication activities.

The City Staff will coordinate and arrange for the meeting space to be used for the public meeting in addition to coordinating a location near the site for the team's use as the charrette studio. The City Staff should also use regular resources and methods for public notification, including: newspaper notices, public fliers, email distribution lists/listserves, etc and HOK will post the meeting date, time, location, etc on the project website.

Product: Final charrette schedule and management plan via email.

Timeframe & Staff: Upon notice to proceed, HOK will begin these discussions with City staff. HOK will be available as needed to complete this preparation.

- 3.2. *Design Charrette.* The dates have been identified as September 6th through the 11th. This task describes a five-day charrette, organized around two large-scale public workshops; an open house or "pin-up" session; team design sessions; and focused meetings with staff and key stakeholders. The charrette's purpose is to



bring the client, the design team, and the community together in a transparent process of mutual discovery and problem solving. Such workshops offer an excellent, cost-effective way to:

- foster collaboration among team members, local officials, property owners, community activists and the general public;
- concentrate creative energy and technical expertise; and
- support the real-time testing and refinement of planning and design ideas.

For the workshop, HOK recommends that an on-site studio be established. By working on-site, the team is able to focus fully on the project and collaborate directly with stakeholders.

(See attached Charrette Schedule for summary of activities).

Charrette—Day One. The team will spend the morning of the first day setting up the studio space and preparing for the opening workshop. Late in the afternoon, the team will hold an all-hands meeting with staff to review workshop plans and assign responsibilities.

During the first evening of the charrette, team members will facilitate a public workshop to discuss and solicit agreement on the issues resulting from the Public Outreach activities (Task 2) and generate planning and design ideas. The workshop will be designed as an interactive work session beginning with a review of the consolidated ideas from the Public Visioning Session (Task 2.5) and a discussion of design principles.

Charrette—Day Two. The second day of the workshop will begin with a debriefing and an agenda setting session with staff. HOK will review feedback from the opening workshop and present to staff our recommendations regarding concepts and alternatives ready for testing during the balance of the charrette. The concepts and alternatives will address, at a conceptual level, the following:

- use mix and development intensity
- building footprints, height, and form
- streetscape and public space/open space improvements
- retail nodes/locations
- transportation system improvements
- preservation and conservation strategies



As appropriate, the concepts and alternatives will be illustrated using text, plan drawings, and precedent images.

In the late-morning and early afternoon, key members of the team will participate in a series of roundtable discussions to explore specific ideas or topics such as transportation, public spaces, or neighborhood conservation. As the roundtable discussions are underway, the design team will prepare plan drawings and sketches illustrating the agreed-upon concepts and alternatives.

Charrette—Day Three. As with the second day, the third day of the workshop will begin with a team/staff work session during which we will report on our progress. During this session, close attention will be focused on promising new ideas and potential conflicts surfaced during the previous day's stakeholder work sessions.

In the evening, the team will host an open house or "pin-up" session, during which team members will tour people through the studio and informally facilitate small group discussions. During this session, team members will continue to work on concepts and alternatives while team leaders will facilitate discussions with attendees.

Charrette—Day Four. As with the third day, the fourth day of the workshop will begin with a team/staff work session during which we will report on our progress. Again, during this session, close attention will be focused on promising new ideas and potential conflicts surfaced during the previous day's stakeholder work sessions with open house.

The team's design work will continue through the late morning and afternoon. Members will refine drawings prepared during the day, incorporate new ideas as directed by staff and prepare for the final public workshop.

Charrette—Day Five. On the final day, the team will produce drawings and sketches for use in the final workshop. Day Five is closed to the public through the afternoon as the amount of information to be delivered at the final pin-up is quite large and the team needs to focus on bringing all of the ideas to a visual form. The day is spent drawing, refining and writing.

The charrette will conclude with a Public Workshop the evening of the final day. This session will be organized around a presentation of the design team's work, a



report on design and development strategies, and a session to get feedback on proposals.

Charrette Products. The deliverables expected to be prepared at the conclusion of the five-day effort shall be concepts in sketch format. These may include the following:

- Framework Plan – a general plan that will show schematically building footprints, existing and proposed parking, open spaces and circulation paths. The drawing will be completed at a scale appropriate to the magnitude of the project area.
- Diagrams of the framework plan to reinforce the planning principles and consultant analysis depicted by the plan.
- Up to three detailed plans of potential development sites at a larger scale with additional detail on building, open space, and circulation elements.
- Character sketches or vignettes or photographic images to illustrate visually the proposed redevelopment concept.

Product: As listed above in 'Charrette Products'

Timeframe & Staff: Not more than six HOK Staff will be necessary to staff the charrette.

- 3.3. ***Charrette Follow-Up Meeting.*** Following the completion of the charrette, HOK will meet with City Staff to review the outcome of the design effort. In advance of the meeting, HOK expects that City Staff will identify any outstanding issues resulting from the charrette and will provide HOK with clear direction for a preferred solution to be incorporated in the final plan report during the follow-up meeting. In addition, the City Staff and HOK will work together to formulate recommendations to be included in the report (Task 4).

Product: Meeting notes via email

Timeframe & Staff: One three-hour meeting has been included in this scope and will be attended by three staff from HOK, consultants, and City Staff.

Task 4. Final Deliverables

- 4.1. ***Draft Final Report.*** HOK will prepare a draft final report summarizing the process and participation, outline of the discussion and alternatives considered during the charrette, and detail the final outcome of the design alternatives. In addition, HOK will also include recommendations developed with City Staff in Task 3.3 above in the report.



Product: Adobe PDF and Hard Copy format of the Draft Final Report.

Timeframe & Staff: This task will be completed within 30 calendar days after the five-day charrette by HOK staff. HOK expects the City Staff will review and send a consolidated set of comments to HOK within 14 calendar days to be incorporated into the final report.

- 4.2. *Final Report.* After receiving comments from City Staff on the draft final report, HOK will make final edits and produce a final report for the planning effort.

Product: Adobe PDF and Hard Copy format of the Final Report.

Timeframe & Staff: This task will be completed within 14 calendar days after the HOK staff received final comments from City Staff.

- 4.3. *Final Public Meeting.* HOK will make a final public presentation on the contents of the plan and a summary of the process and participation activities.

Product: Meeting notes via email.

Timeframe & Staff: This meeting will last no more than four hours and will be attended by three staff from HOK.